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**From:** Delgrosso, Karen [Delgrosso.Karen@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 2/9/2021 6:03:12 PM  
**To:** Fernandez, Cristina [Fernandez.Cristina@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** RE: PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia

You're welcome, Cristina!

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**From:** Fernandez, Cristina <Fernandez.Cristina@epa.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2021 12:27 PM  
**To:** Delgrosso, Karen <Delgrosso.Karen@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia

Thanks

Cristina Fernandez  
Air & Radiation Division (3AD00)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3  
1650 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130-2023  
Work: (215) 814-2178  
Cell: (215) 375-0847

On Feb 9, 2021, at 12:18 PM, Delgrosso, Karen <Delgrosso.Karen@epa.gov> wrote:

**FYI – Final Response Sent to Reporter 2/8/21)**

(Diana Esher approved of ARD's response to the additional question asked of the Freelance Reporter on 2-5-21. The protocol is to forward to HQs for their review after Diana's review; HQ did not respond to R3. Because R3's 2-5-21 response reiterates its original response or 2-3-21, OPA forwarded the response to the reporter as noted below.)

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**From:** Landis, Jeffrey <Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2021 11:54 AM  
**To:** Delgrosso, Karen <Delgrosso.Karen@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia

FYSA – got no response from HQ so I just sent it along.

r/ Jeff Landis  
Senior Media Relations/Press Officer & Executive Events Coordinator  
Region 3 Office of Public Affairs (3RA21)  
215-814-2921; mobile 215-901-7424

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**From:** Landis, Jeffrey  
**Sent:** Monday, February 8, 2021 4:46 PM  
**To:** Austyn Gaffney <austyn.gaffney@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia

Austyn,

I did ask again, and got no response, but I respect your deadline so here's what we have:

**QUESTION:**

1) Patrick Campbell, a NOAA-associated air quality expert, independently reviewed Rockwool's 2017 air quality permit. Campbell concluded the permit was "deficient;" it violated EPA guidelines by comparing the air emissions at the Rockwool site to an inappropriate site in Garrett County, Maryland. What is your response?

**EPA RESPONSE:**

Thank you for your additional question regarding Mr. Campbell's independent review and conclusion of Rockwool's 2017 air quality permit. As EPA mentioned in our previous response, WVDEP advertised a draft air quality permit for public notice on March 28, 2018. EPA reviewed Rockwool's draft permit for applicability of state and federal air emission control requirements. WVDEP addressed EPA's comments and issued the permit to Rockwool on April 30, 2019. EPA believes that WVDEP addressed all relevant federal and state requirements, including addressing our comments, before issuing the final PSD permit to Rockwool.

r/ Jeff Landis

Senior Media Relations/Press Officer & Executive Events Coordinator

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On Feb 8, 2021, at 4:41 PM, Austyn Gaffney <[austyn.gaffney@gmail.com](mailto:austyn.gaffney@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Jeffrey,

Thanks so much; do you know if you'll be able to get a response by EOD today? & the article should be published end of Feb or March. It's for In These Times & Vice NEWS.

On Fri, Feb 5, 2021 at 10:54 AM Landis, Jeffrey <[Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov](mailto:Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov)> wrote:

Austyn,

We are checking on that now and hope to get back to you today, but I can't promise that, after all the review layers the response has to go through. When did you plan on writing this article? And is it for "In These Times" or another publication?

r/ Jeff Landis

Senior Media Relations/Press Officer & Executive Events Coordinator

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**From:** Austyn Gaffney <[austyn.gaffney@gmail.com](mailto:austyn.gaffney@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, February 5, 2021 7:34 AM

**To:** Landis, Jeffrey <[Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov](mailto:Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia

Hi Jeffrey,

Thanks so much for these helpful responses. I appreciate you forwarding on 2&3 to headquarters. A (hopefully final) question came up during fact check; does EPA Region 3 or headquarters have a response to this?

1) Patrick Campbell, a NOAA-associated air quality expert, independently reviewed Rockwool's 2017 air quality permit. Campbell concluded the permit was "deficient;" it violated EPA guidelines by comparing the air emissions at the Rockwool site to an inappropriate site in Garrett County, Maryland. What is your response?

Thank you!

On Wed, Feb 3, 2021 at 8:34 AM Landis, Jeffrey <[Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov](mailto:Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov)> wrote:

Austyn,

Please see responses to your three questions (follow-ups to the Rockwool plant press query):

**Follow up questions:**

Q1. Jefferson County community residents have stated EPA Region 3 needs to provide more oversight on the WVDEP, including forcing Rockwool to submit a new air quality permit reflective of a change in fuel sources (from coal and natural gas to just natural gas to ensure the use of best available control

technologies for natural gas). Has EPA Region 3 determined whether or not Rockwool should submit a new air quality permit? If so, why? If not, why not? **As mentioned previously, the air permitting program is fully delegated to the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP), and EPA is a co-regulator. In regards to the “change in fuel sources” mentioned in the question, Rockwool provided notification to WVDEP in a letter dated March 2, 2020 that it planned “to operate the Melt Furnace using only natural gas, as allowed under Permit No. R14-0037.” On August 5, 2020, WVDEP replied to the July 29, 2020, Jefferson County Foundation letter regarding the same topic, saying that “Permit R14-0037, as issued on April 30, 2018 is and remains valid for the construction and proposed operation of the facility. It is important to note that no Administrative Updates, regardless of class, have been issued, or are warranted...”. WVDEP consulted with EPA prior to issuing its August 5, 2020 letter. EPA reviewed the permit and associated letters, and found WVDEP’s conclusion that the proposed operation of the Melt Furnace using only natural gas is allowable under Permit No. R14-0037 to be reasonable.**

Q2. Jefferson County residents state under President Trump, the EPA focused on deregulation (the New York Times compiled 112 rollbacks by Jan. 20, 2021), making sympathy for their cause against Rockwool unlikely from the federal level. They say they’ve received silence from some of their petitions to the EPA. What is your response?

Q3. Jefferson County community residents have stated they are “cautiously optimistic” the federal EPA will become a more forceful institution under a Biden administration, including stricter oversight of the Clean Air and Water Acts. Does Biden plan on increasing EPA’s oversight over the states? Is there a timeline? If so, why? If not, why not?

#### **Combined response for Q2 & 3:**

**“EPA will follow the science and law in accordance with the Biden-Harris Administration’s executive orders and other directives in reviewing all of the agency’s actions issued under the previous Administration to ensure that they protect public health and the environment.” – EPA spokesperson**

r/ Jeff Landis

Senior Media Relations/Press Officer & Executive Events Coordinator

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**From:** Landis, Jeffrey

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 2, 2021 3:57 PM

**To:** Austyn Gaffney <[austyn.gaffney@gmail.com](mailto:austyn.gaffney@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** RE: PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia

Austyn,

I just wanted to let you know we received all three of your questions and are working on a response to Question 1. Questions 2 and 3 are best answered by EPA Headquarters, Washington, D.C., so I forwarded them along for their coordination/response. I hope to get back with you before your deadline.

r/ Jeff Landis

Senior Media Relations/Press Officer & Executive Events Coordinator

Region 3 Office of Public Affairs (3RA21)

215-814-2921; mobile 215-901-7424

**From:** Austyn Gaffney <[austyn.gaffney@gmail.com](mailto:austyn.gaffney@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 2, 2021 11:57 AM

**To:** Landis, Jeffrey <[Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov](mailto:Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia

Additional question:

Jefferson County residents state under President Trump, the EPA focused on deregulation (the New York Times compiled 112 rollbacks by Jan. 20, 2021), making sympathy for their cause against Rockwool unlikely from the federal level. They say they've received silence from some of their petitions to the EPA. What is your response?

On Tue, Feb 2, 2021 at 10:42 AM Austyn Gaffney <[austyn.gaffney@gmail.com](mailto:austyn.gaffney@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Jeffrey,

I had some followup questions for EPA Region 3. If you could answer, or provide any additional comment, by Thursday EOD, it would be greatly appreciated.

Questions:

Jefferson County community residents have stated EPA Region 3 needs to provide more oversight on the WVDEP, including forcing Rockwool to submit a new air quality permit reflective of a change in fuel sources (from coal and natural gas to just natural gas to ensure the use of best available control technologies for natural gas). Has EPA Region 3 determined whether or not Rockwool should submit a new air quality permit? If so, why? If not, why not?

Jefferson County community residents have stated they are "cautiously optimistic" the federal EPA will become a more forceful institution under a Biden administration, including stricter oversight of the Clean Air and Water Acts. Does Biden plan on increasing EPA's oversight over the states? Is there a timeline? If so, why? If not, why not?

Best,

Austyn

On Fri, Jan 15, 2021 at 2:25 PM Landis, Jeffrey <[Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov](mailto:Landis.Jeffrey@epa.gov)> wrote:

Austyn,

Thanks for your patience. Please see our response below as well as two attachments.

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### **EPA Responses:**

Q1) Would the Rockwool plant's projected emissions ([linked here](#)) violate any EPA standards? Specifically, would any of the emissions violate any EPA standards according to Rockwool's own estimates?

**A1:** The linked document is Rockwool's Clean Air Act Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permit application submitted to West Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (WVDEQ) on November 20, 2017. Under the provisions of the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), EPA and WVDEQ are co-regulators but the permitting program is fully delegated to WVDEP. WVDEP advertised a draft air quality permit for public notice on March 28, 2018. EPA reviewed Rockwool's draft permit for applicability of state and federal air emission control requirements. WVDEP addressed EPA's comments and issued the permit to Rockwool on April 30, 2019. EPA believes WVDEP addressed all relevant federal and state requirements, including addressing our comments, before issuing the final PSD permit to Rockwool.

Q2) Has EPA Region 3 replied to the letter Jefferson County Foundation sent on July 21, 2020 (attached)? If so, can I have a copy of the EPA's response? If not, why has the EPA not yet responded, and what might the EPA's conclusions be based on the letter?

**A2:** EPA Mid-Atlantic Region received a letter from the Jefferson County Foundation, Inc., on July 9, 2020 (not July 21, 2020), with the subject of "Advisory: That West Virginia Entities Are Being Allowed to Operate Construction Projects In Violation of the

Clean Water Act and Request for Stop Work.” A response to that letter was sent to JCF on Aug. 10, 2020. Both the original letter and EPA Mid-Atlantic Region’s response have been attached to this correspondence. The response underscores simply that EPA cannot comment on an ongoing or active litigation. As for the letter you mentioned dated July 21, 2020, addressed to David Ross, EPA’s Office of Water, please contact the Office of Water by emailing [Press@epa.gov](mailto:Press@epa.gov).

On Jan 14, 2021, at 2:23 PM, Seneca, Roy <[Seneca.Roy@epa.gov](mailto:Seneca.Roy@epa.gov)> wrote:

Austyn – I work in the EPA Region 3 press office and your inquiry was passed on to me. We are working on getting you a response. I will be off tomorrow so please contact my supervisor Jeff Landis if need anything further. Also, can you let us know what media you are writing for? Thanks. – Roy

Roy Seneca

EPA Region 3 Press Officer

Office of Public Affairs

[seneca.roy@epa.gov](mailto:seneca.roy@epa.gov)

(215) 814-5567

**From:** Austyn Gaffney <[austyn.gaffney@gmail.com](mailto:austyn.gaffney@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 8:43 AM  
**To:** R3 RA <[R3\\_RA@epa.gov](mailto:R3_RA@epa.gov)>; Libertz, Catherine <[Libertz.Catherine@epa.gov](mailto:Libertz.Catherine@epa.gov)>; [pricfay.michelle@epa.gov](mailto:pricfay.michelle@epa.gov)  
**Subject:** PRESS QUERY: Rockwool Plant in West Virginia



Hi Region 3 EPA,

I'm a reporter working on a story about the Rockwool plant in West Virginia and I had some specific questions I was hoping the Region 3 EPA staff could answer.

1) Would the Rockwool plant's projected emissions ([linked here](#)) violate any EPA standards?

Specifically, would any of the emissions violate any EPA standards according to Rockwool's own estimates?

2) Has EPA Region 3 replied to the letter Jefferson County Foundation sent on July 21, 2020 (attached)? If so, can I have a copy of the EPA's response? If not, why has the EPA not yet responded, and what might the EPA's conclusions be based on the letter?

My deadline is Friday EOD; please let me know if that's possible for you to meet, and if a phone call would be faster (270-784-1257).

All best,

Austyn

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Austyn Gaffney

Freelance Reporter

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